

ANIMAL CONTROL COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
January 14, 2019

MEMBERS

Sarah Nickel
Valerie Pena
Tom Rea
Nancy Riggert
James Schultz
Rebecca Warren

STAFF

Lisa Ritchel
Virgil Sauder

PUBLIC

Julie Gray

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tom moved to approve the November 19, 2018 minutes as written.
James seconded. Motion passes 6-0-0.

NEW BUSINESS

- i. Officers for 2019 – Chair and vice-chair.

After some discussion, Nancy nominated the following slate of officers: Rebecca Warren as Chair and Valerie Pena as Vice-Chair. James seconded. Motion passes 6-0-0.

- ii. Meeting Dates for 2019

Tom asked if it would be possible to change the meetings from the 3rd Monday of the month to the 2nd Monday due to a conflict he has. Rebecca asked Virgil if that would interfere with the county AMC meetings and if that would make it difficult for the city attorney to attend. He didn't think there would be a problem, but will double check. There also may be a few adjustments due to holidays.

Tom moved to change the ACC meetings from the 3rd Monday of the month to the 2nd Monday of the month, pending a conversation with the city attorney.

Nancy seconded. Motion passes 6-0-0.

1. January 14th
2. February 11th
3. March 11th
4. April 8th
5. May 13th
6. June 10th
7. July 8th
8. August 12th
9. September 16th
10. October 14th
11. November 18th
12. December 9th

REPORTS

i. Animal Care and Control Report

Virgil sent out the end of the year statistics for 2018 to the commission. He explained that there was an increase in intake of about 52 more dogs and 36 more cats from the previous year. Even with this increase and with the construction project, the shelter ended the year with great numbers. 93% of dogs and 81% of cats had a positive outcome, and were either adopted, sent to rescue or returned to owner. The euthanasia rate for dogs was 6% and 7% for cats, which was the first time for the cat rate to be under 10%! There were over 1500 city animal control calls, 109 bite cases, which was up from 84 the previous year, and 144 abuse/neglect cases. There is not enough data yet, but the increase in bite cases could be from better reporting of bites or from the increase in aggressive dogs shelters are seeing nationwide. This increase could be from shelters becoming no-kill or from shelters adopting out more animals with issues. Virgil concluded by explaining that now that the construction is complete, the focus will be more internal. Currently the adoption process is getting updated and the application is getting revised. They are considering a promotion with canine good citizenship, growing the behavior program and updating medical treatment protocols.

ii. MCHA Update

Rebecca stated that there is a big initiative coming up this year relating to the clinic and its growth. Dr. Breese has joined the team, has been doing some in house surgery and is also interested in doing some mass spay days to assist with the community cat program. Rebecca is working with Virgil to address and identify those needs. MCHA will have a proposal for the Benji Program next month. This program is a funded opportunity, shared initiative between BACC and MCHA. The biggest need currently is cats. The clinic is still very busy seeing around 600 animals a month. The pantry is also very busy giving out about 2000 lbs. of food per month. They continue to do surgeries as needed with Dr. Snyder in Indianapolis. The education program continues to be busy, but unfortunately lost a couple of the education rats. There were two dogs in emergency housing last week, and currently there is one. The need for this program increases during the winter as clients are homeless and are seeking shelter from the cold. The current requirements for the program are spay/neuter, vaccinations and a 10 day minimum hold. Rebecca explained that often clients find out about the program though the Shalom Center. She concluded by announcing that Tails on the Town will be April 27.

iii. AMC Update

Valerie reported that elections were held and she is the new president and Clark Sorensen is the new vice president. The common thread of the past several cases is that people are having major financial difficulties with housing, food, taking care of themselves and their animals. She projected that the commission may need to rethink some of the ordinances due to this trend. Charging people money doesn't always work to achieve the best outcome. She pondered what the alternatives are to non-payment, when the money from tickets is needed to help pay for the officers. Valerie added that the county has a new program where they can collect outstanding debts by intercepting tax return checks. Valerie also explained that for the first time a person

appealing a case was represented by an attorney from a not-for profit legal service, to help reach an agreement with an ongoing case. The appellant's dog Clyde has been in the shelter since August 13, 2018. Before Clyde can be reclaimed, the owner has to have housing.

ANIMAL CONTROL COMMISSION DISCUSSION – Virgil Sauder

i. Pet Store Ordinance

James began by clarifying that the proposed ordinance is a ban on the retail sale of cats and dogs, not a pet store ban. Any dog or cat sold in the city has to come from a shelter or a rescue organization. On page 5 of his memo, he added the cities along with the states that currently have a ban, as was asked of him at the last meeting. After talking with Jenna Jenson from the Humane Society of the United States, he changed the language of the proposed ordinance, adopted her whereas clauses and lowered the penalties. These changes can be seen on pages 7 and 8 of the memo.

The commission then discussed James' proposal and how to move forward. Sarah suggested checking with city legal first to see if there are any issues. Valerie suggested proceeding in this order: give it to city legal, vote on it, send it to the mayor, send it to city council.

Virgil stated that he will take the proposal both to city legal to seek their opinion on its legality, and to the Director of Public Works. He will ask for initial feedback by February. Rebecca asked the commission to read the memo in its entirety to be prepared for the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Julie Gray was present and introduced herself as a volunteer for both the shelter and MCHA. She is also a district representative of the HSUS. She has been researching this proposed ordinance and has been speaking with both Erin, the regional director, and Anne Sterling at the HSUS. Julie explained that she learned how the city works during her work with the controversial measure to stop deer hunting in Griffy. She believes that it would be possible for the commission to get a council member to support the measure, then that member could introduce it as a proposed ordinance. Then if the council passed it, it would go to the mayor for approval or denial. So this route could also be taken. She continued by explaining that the ban on the sale of dogs and cats in retail pet stores is becoming increasingly common. St. Joseph County, Indiana has already banned it. The HSUS has a voluntary program where pet stores can take a pledge where they won't sell dogs and cats. There is an office at the HSUS who will work with the pet store to help them transition. Many pet store owners are finding this a positive change because they can invite shelters in and sell pet supplies. Their good will raises the public's perception of them. There are already some pet stores in Indianapolis, Richmond, Greenwood and St. John that have taken the pledge. She continued by explaining that this proposal doesn't have to be anti-business and in addition, it is pro-consumer. Often the pets purchased from pet stores are sick and they cause the owner great expense and heartache. This proposal protects people as well as the animals. She believes that there is widespread public support for this ban and the climate is right. Julie concluded by stating that it is just the right thing to do. Selling sickly animals from puppy mills is not a good thing. In conclusion, the more localities that pass this, the easier it will be for others to do the same.

The meeting adjourned at 7:18pm.